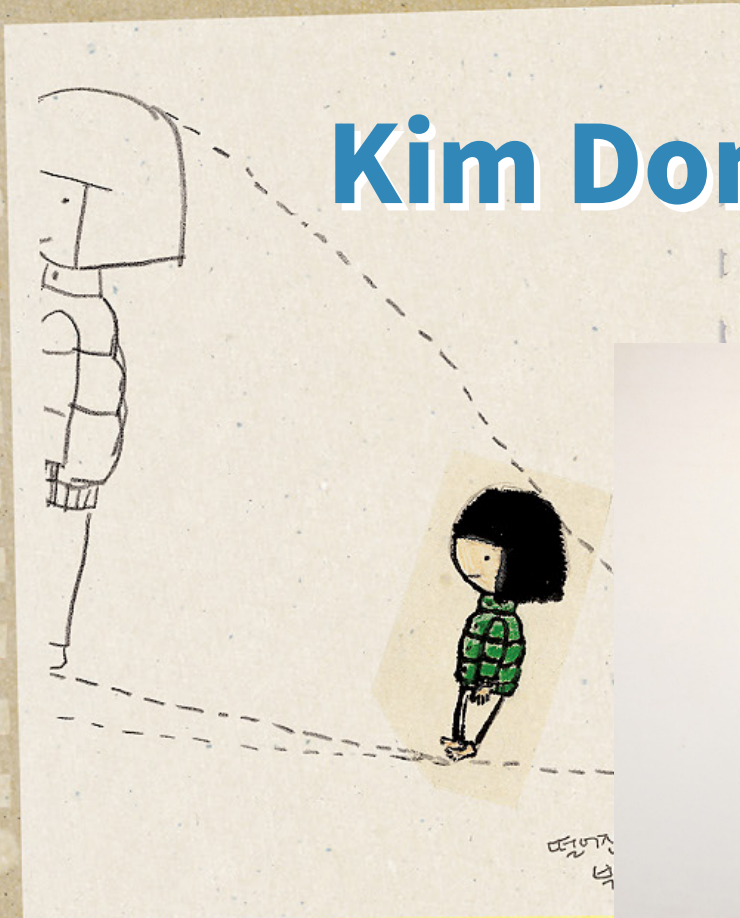


**2026**  
**Hans Christian**  
**Andersen Award**  
**Nominee**

Republic of Korea

ILLUSTRATOR

**Kim Dong-soo**







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## 1 | Biographical Information



“Sometimes you look back on the past and wonder, ‘Why on earth was I ever worried about that?’ Some worries barely faze adults, but mean the universe to children. That’s what I had in mind when I was working on this book.”

The children in Kim Dong-Soo’s picture books are characterized by a nurturing attitude towards the world around them. Her books communicate the act of nurturing and the ethical awareness of children; her characters look after ducks whose feathers have been plucked by humans, animals run down by cars, and even water ghosts who strive to purify the river. These acts of nurturing by children are both voluntary and highly specific while also bearing characteristics of play. Kim displays trust in children’s respect for life, their sensitivity to justice, and their capacity for empathy. These recurring themes are rooted heavily in her own childhood experiences.

Born in 1978 in the city of Daejeon, Kim Dong-soo enjoyed painting from an early age. Her older brother died at the age of four of a heart condition before she was born, so Kim never saw him except through a pair of old photographs. As a child, she sometimes saw her mother weep at the sight of young patients in a children’s hospital ward on a TV show titled *24-Hour Hospital*. Raised by a mother who had lost a child, Kim knew what it was to be a parent left behind. The concept of death was always near her from childhood.

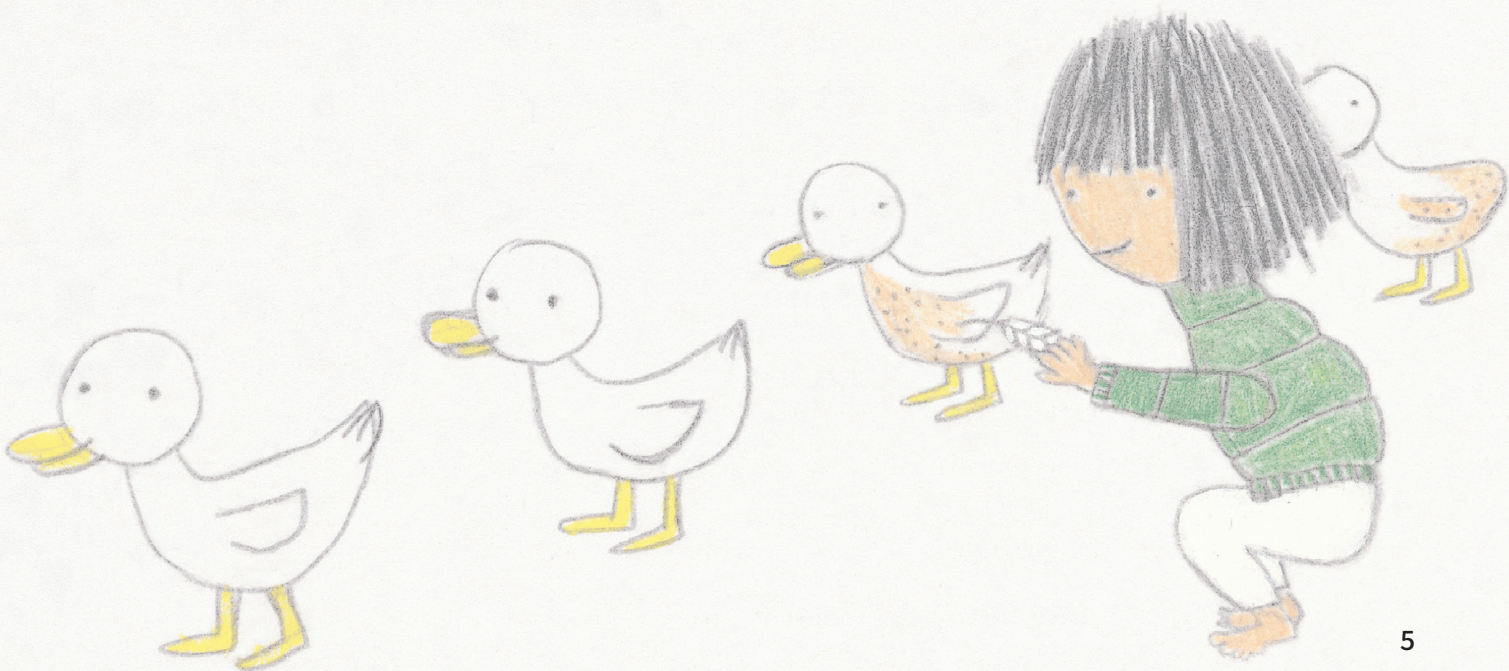
Kim always enjoyed art and grew up with undefined hopes for making a living as an artist. She majored in painting at Dongduk Women’s University, and in her third year of studies, she resolved to become an illustrator following a chance encounter with the *Monthly Illust* magazine. In 2001, during her final year of university, she submitted four illustrations that would be later used in *My Almighty Rubberpowered Airplane* to the Korea Art Competition for Publishing and was awarded the grand prize. In 2002, her manuscript for *How I Caught a Cold* was granted the commendation prize at the Borim Picture Book Contest, marking her official



debut as a picture book author. In 2005, *How I Caught a Cold* and *My Almighty Rubberpowered Airplane* were part of the 100 Korean Picture Books selection at the Frankfurt Book Fair, and both have been published in Japan, Taiwan, France, and Greece. Kim has also participated as a representative Korean picture book artist at various international book fairs in Tokyo, Guadalajara, Paris, and Gothenburg. In 2024, she received the 65th Korea Book Award for *To Do List*, which centers on a child who quietly takes actions to save the world.

Kim Dong-soo also frequently collaborates with other artists in genres encompassing folk tales, children's poems, lyrics to pop music, and non-fiction, bringing her creativity and insight into each new work. She was both author and illustrator of *How I Caught a Cold*, *Kiss Kiss*, *Farewell*, and *To Do List*, while she worked with art director Park Hye-joon to create collage for *My Almighty Rubberpowered Airplane*. Kim also authored the picture book *Munsu's Secret*, based on famed Korean singer-songwriter Lucid Fall's song "Munsu's Secret." Her personal style remains clear and consistent in other collaborative works such as *Washing Hair* (Written by Choi Jung-sun), *The First Day of School* (Written by Song Eon), *The Story of Birth* (Written by Huh Eunsil), the children's novel *Grandma's House* (Written by Lee Yeong-deuk), and the children's poetry anthology *The Watermelon Seed* (Written by Choi Myeong-ran).

In spite of the length of her career, Kim is not a prolific author. However, her illustration techniques and narratives are both intensely unique and memorable, and her personal touch remains clear in all her stories.



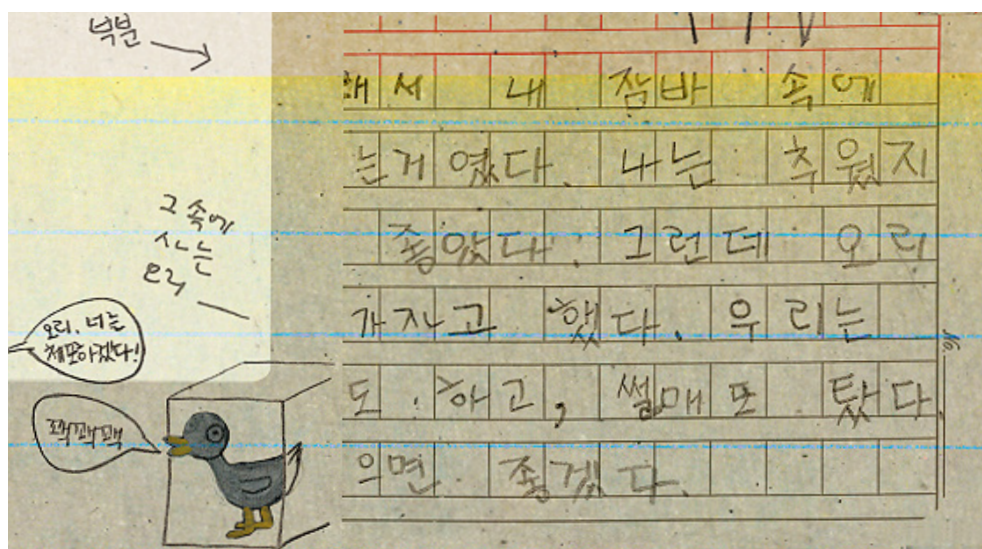


## 2 | Contribution to Literature for Young People

### Children Who Fight for Climate Justice

Kim Dong-soo's child characters are always busy fighting for justice. They think constantly of the well-being of other creatures, taking the side of the planet as friends to ducklings and rescuers of snakes and frogs. They are even invited to assist water ghosts struggling to purify the river. Surprisingly, Kim has been writing progressive themes like climate justice and animal welfare from 2002, before most institutions had begun to deal seriously with such topics.

Her first picture book *How I Caught a Cold* brings a child face-to-face with a flock of ducks that have been plucked naked—the very night she has been given a duck down jacket as a present. In her dream, the protagonist meets a flock of shivering ducks and realizes that her warm jacket was only made possible by the suffering of the ducks. She responds by pulling all the down out of her jacket and returning them to the ducks. Then she spends the rest of the dream happily sledding alongside the flock. The next morning, she wakes up with a cold. In the illustration, the protagonist is depicted holding her thermometer in her mouth, with a look of determined resolution. The childlike scrawl on the cover of the book states, “I was cold, but happy,” reiterating the protagonist’s outlook that she is happy to catch a cold if it means keeping the ducks safe: a decision for justice and animal welfare in an age of climate crisis by a child who chooses to suffer the cold rather than build her comfort on the sufferings of other beings.





*Farewell* is another representative work by Kim Dong-soo, featuring an old scrap collector who comes across a puppy that has been run down and killed by a truck. The old woman gathers up the puppy, and the bodies of other animals killed on the road, and gives them proper sendoffs. Throughout the course of this book, young readers encounter one roadkill animal after another, and learn to respect all life through the loving care of the old woman who gives them the funerals they deserve. In this process, young readers organically come to understand the perspective of sympoiesis discussed by philosopher Donna Haraway. Like La Loba from Mexican mythology, an old woman who gathers up wolf bones and sings to them to bring them to life, the old woman in *Farewell* breathes life back into the sick and the dead, tidies up their bodies and lays them on a boat. She commemorates their memories with white flowers.

In *To Do List*, children set out to nurture the environment in order to assist the water ghosts who seek to purify the polluted river. The main character picks up plastic bags and bottles from the water, and babysits the children of the water ghosts. In a world where everything is callously thrown away and forgotten, Kim Dong-soo depicts children as the agents of healing, memory, protection, and nurturing. The magical teamwork between animals, plants, ghosts and spirits, and the children are a beacon of hope and safety for the future to come, a source of encouragement for readers seeking to protect their own endangered communities.



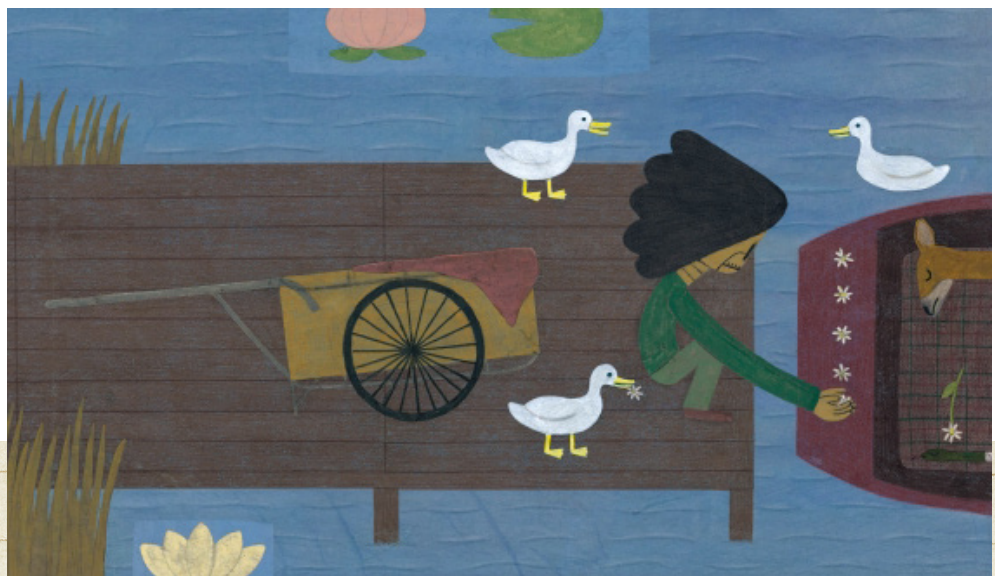


## **Children Who Overcome Grief with Play and Solidarity**

Kim Dong-soo's works deftly and elegantly engage with topics that picture book authors are often reluctant to handle, such as direct depictions of creatures killed or harmed by humans, interactions with polluted environments, and the concept of grieving the dead. The keywords that allow Kim bring such topics to the forefront are "play" and "solidarity." In her stories, children are friends to all living things, and even the dead. These children are able to reach a helping hand to those in need, just as they can call for help in trouble. This mutual assistance between different individual groups is a reflection of Kim's progressive attitude towards children; in her books, children are individuals with agency in the relationships of equals between animals, plants, ghosts, children, and adults. She treats children as intelligent enough to trust in, which allows her seemingly simple narrative structure of Home-Outside-Home to encourage children to dream even bigger. Her adventures are framed as death-defying journeys, but depicted with a sense of visual and spatial stability alongside comforting green hues and intricate, repeated patterns.

*Farewell* may also be read as a Ssimgim-gut, a funerary ritual performed for those who die suddenly. The ritual is meant to resolve the resentments and unaddressed emotions of the dead, and for the reincarnation of the dead into paradise. A beautiful and serene last rite for animals killed on the streets. This work is especially meaningful in that it brings the countless bodies on the roadsides to the forefront, instead of turning away from them. These corpses have burst bellies or crushed limbs, requiring some effort to face. But Kim eases the discomfort of the act by depicting the dead in simplistic, two-dimensional images, and even adds elements of humor to lighten the mood for children who may struggle with the heavy themes of the book.

Kim's next work will feature a world of dead children; and as children continue to die, more and more fill the world of the dead children. The deaths of the weak and marginalized, including children, have long been ignored by society. In this book, the children who have





arrived earlier use magical erasers to erase the wounds of the newcomers, bandage them up, or clothe them as they welcome the children who have died of abuse, accident, or illness. If *Farewell* was the story of sending off the dead after one final day of happiness, Kim's upcoming book is sure to be a narrative of mourning and healing reminiscent of Astrid Lindgren's *The Brothers Lionheart*.

### **The Use of Graffiti Art and Children's Liberation**

Kim Dong-soo makes use of children's doodles, their rough drafts of writing assignments, rambling journal entries, and scribbles as key elements of her stories. The title designs of *How I Caught a Cold*, *My Almighty Rubberpowered Airplane*, *The First Day of School*, and *Grandma's House* are all designed in childlike font, and collages of childlike work feature regularly in her stories. Graffiti has existed since the beginning of culture, and served as an unofficial medium of art for those marginalized by mainstream media. As a sort of outsider art, graffiti was a freedom cry and social critique rolled into one. A child's doodling can also be treated as graffiti. Tired of monotonous lessons and a competitive educational system, children doodle in the spaces within their reach as a way of securing small scraps of freedom. Their graffiti helps them deal with pent-up emotions or long waits. While adult graffiti decorates subways and downtown building walls, children's graffiti is on a smaller scale, left on the corners and margins of notebooks and textbooks. But they are no different from adult graffiti in the sense that they are a method by which the marginalized express themselves with agency. There is resistance in children's graffiti, shown in the ways they express worries they cannot reveal to the authority of adults or the ways they parody their circumstance.

Kim Dong-soo brings this graffiti to the forefront in her works, constructing an archive of children's daily lives through their graffiti. Even in her personal art style, she makes frequent use of doodles and humorous sketches. Some of these sketches are taken





straight from her own childhood notebooks, while others are intricate recreations she designed in adulthood. At times, she is inspired by the doodles of children around her. The subconscious of her young characters is regularly depicted through informal doodles, a familiar methodology for children. The use of graffiti—children’s doodles—and sketches serve to connect young readers even more strongly to the characters in Kim’s works. Their independent thoughts and ideas are more clearly expressed through the doodles outside the printed text, allowing young readers to thoroughly enjoy a sense of freedom as the graffiti that speaks on their behalf takes charge of the narratives woven by Kim.

### **The Legacy of Intricate Handicrafts and Tradition**

Although Kim Dong-soo’s works clearly reflect a contemporary and progressive outlook, her art style and techniques are almost a textbook example of intricate handicraft, using difficult traditional techniques to form artistic masterpieces worth preserving for posterity.

Kim Dong-soo does not make use of any digital techniques in her illustrations, instead utilizing Hwaseonji (traditional Korean rice paper). As a medium, Hwaseonji is extremely thin and therefore a difficult canvas for painting multiple elements; watercolors also spread easily over Hwaseonji. Kim resolved these issues by developing a new technique where she covers the Hwaseonji with a thin layer of gouache to minimize the unwanted spread of colors. Kim’s illustrations conceal the original lines of her sketches in order to highlight the natural colors of her watercolors and the clear textures of the translucent Hwaseonji. This is done by sketching the image in reverse on the back of the paper, then placing the paper on a light box to color the other side. This technique lends her characters a more vivid, lively look and highlights the realism of her objects and backgrounds.

Kim further enhances the sense of comfort in her works by maintaining consistent imagery and borrowing from traditional paper doll play. She makes multiples of each character and paints them all at once, cutting them out of the paper and making sure to have backups stored away as a contingency. Once she has determined the spatial designs and the blocking of the characters, she arranges her paper dolls in a process reminiscent of a children’s game. The only difference is in the intricacy and ornateness of Kim’s works; each of her hand-crafted illustrations is endearing and clear, lacking the mechanical cleanness of digital art. They are an expression of traditional handicrafts and exude the kind of love and affection found only in objects that have been loved for many years.

*Munsu’s Secret* utilizes a traditional Joseon-era style of art known as Chaekgado, a unique Korean genre of art where specific perspective and lighting techniques are used to create a sense of space and volume, depicting books and accoutrements in close detail. Kim Dong-soo’s illustrations show a similar level of detail in even the smallest objects in the background, using the characteristic perspective and composition of traditional Chaekgado reminiscent of works on display at art exhibits. Even half-finished bags of chips and the fried chicken left in a plastic takeout bowl are depicted in painstaking detail, and the combined use of one-point



and multi-point perspective allows for the focus of multiple objects from multiple angles—an effective way of depicting objects for curious children who might want to pick up individual elements and inspect them for themselves. This strategy allows young readers to satisfy their curiosity instantly, without having to search for each object in real life.



Chaekgado, Illustrated by Yi Eung-rok (Korean, 1808-after 1874)

Kim's cut-and-paste illustration technique is reminiscent of the paper cuts of Hans Christian Andersen. Children who had the chance to personally listen to his storytimes would often cheer in delight as he picked up his scissors and displayed his paper cut art. Paper art—cutting or tearing paper and sticking them on surfaces—is one of the first art techniques children learn. Glue and scissors are a child's best friends, and thus Kim Dong-soo's images, made of cut and pasted paper, come across as even more familiar to young readers by combining the materiality of paper with books and play. Kim Dong-soo's choice of technique, that is, the use of cut and pasted paper, succeeds in creating an aesthetic experience that perfectly suits the sensibilities of the children who are her target demographic.



### 3 | Essays on Kim Dong-soo's Works

#### Illustrations of Multi-Perspective Narratives: The Picture Books of Kim Dong-soo

Author Kim Dong-soo, who both writes and illustrates most of her picture books, often draws on the journal format. Her first published work, *How I Caught a Cold*, is formatted like an illustrated diary, while her collaborative book *The First Day of School* (Story: Song Eon) directly uses the subtitle “Dear Diary” to explicitly frame the narrative as a series of journal entries. The narrators of these stories are more speakers than dispassionate expositors, and are often rendered in first person, as with the case of *How I Caught a Cold* (2002), *My Almighty Rubberpowered Airplane* (2005), *Munsu's Secret* (2021), and *To Do List* (2024). *Farewell* (2016) is written in the third person, but is unique in that it includes speech bubbles through which the elderly woman protagonist speaks directly. The final line in the book, “Today is another clear day,” also borrows from the journal format. In *Farewell*, the narrator's identity and connection to the events of the story must be examined carefully. Although technically omniscient, the narrator does not seem like a god, because there is no top-down perspective in this book; only horizontal, eye-level perspectives, as though the narrator is a peer and companion to the elderly woman. An observer who lives in the same world, and wishes to learn more.

What is first person perspective in visual imagery? In painting it would be called “monocular perspective,” and a “POV shot” in film and photography. Both methods depict three-dimensional spaces with one perspective and one vanishing point. Kim Dong-soo's illustrations have always been characterized by a sense of shallow depth, which has been growing more and more shallow over the course of her career. Her early works also frequently feature doodles and playful, hand-written interjections in the corners of the pages, another feature reminiscent of children's illustrated journals. Optical perspective is a visual system developed in modern Western society, and is tied inextricably to modern authority, which has been defined as Western, male, human, and adult. This hegemony of visual supremacy also reflects a sense of supremacy over nature and objects. But the flattening of spaces and the unfocused doodles in Kim's work break from monolithic first-person narratives.

For her illustrations, Kim Dong-soo makes use of watercolors and pencil crayons on traditional Korean rice paper known as “Hwaseonji.” This approach allows for both high saturation and transparency in her visual style. In *My Almighty Rubberpowered Airplane*, she also uses traditional East Asian ink known as “muk” alongside the Hwaseonji, and uses these centuries-old materials to depict contemporary Seoul, the Han River, and the water ghosts that live there. The black-haired ghosts, who became playmates of the protagonist of *My Almighty Rubberpowered Airplane*, feature again in *To Do List* as spirits of the water and protectors of nature. Kim Dong-soo's illustrations are developed like a stage diorama, with the background made first and the characters and objects pasted on the surface afterwards. Kim describes the process as reminiscent of playing with paper dolls. The objects she creates, just like the feath-



ers in *How I Caught a Cold* and the torn and flattened animals in *Farewell*, do not have to be glued permanently to one surface, of course—they can be carefully rearranged and put back together again. Each object is a unit of meaning in Kim's works, each imbued with soul and potential. Kim Dong-soo's picture books serve as a haven for the voices of these pieces, a place of multivocality; illustrations of multi-perspective narratives.

by Han Yoon-ah(visual art critic)





## 4 | Interview with Kim Dong-soo

**"Some worries barely faze adults, but mean the universe to children."**

*I am captivated by a specific piece of art. It is not eye-catching in and of itself, but upon closer inspection, I notice the dynamic energy in the humble lines the comprise it. I am reminded of a child's illustrated diary, but catch the edges of a majestic narrative, one that leads into a conclusion with all the impact of a sucker punch. An adult would recognize the artist by style alone, and a child would simply choose to open up the book the work adorns because it appeals to them. Adults and children alike will, of course, find themselves drawn into the book. Then I notice something else about author Kim Dong-soo's studio. Every nook and corner between the desks and shelves displaying her pictures is packed with books and quotes about the hearts and the daily lives of children. Hers is a commitment to walk at a child's pace, to walk alongside young readers; to deliver to them books that will accompany them, rather than lead them. I turn to Kim and begin the interview:*

**Q: Congratulations on the twentieth anniversary of *How I Caught a Cold*. In your bio, you said that children are extremely worried about matters that barely faze adults. It's interesting you used the word "worry," where most children's authors focus on young readers' imagination and curiosity.**

A: Sometimes you look back on the past and wonder, 'Why on earth was I ever worried about that?' I read through my old journal entries and found a riveting saga about having lent a new pencil to a classmate, who then didn't give it back. I must have been in second grade at the time. The classmate promised to give it back, but I remember being worried sick that I would never see that pencil again. It's a silly thing to worry about, looking back, but children's lives are full of such anxieties. Some worries barely faze adults, but mean the universe to children. That's what I had in mind when I was working on this book. To add, I wrote this bio when I was preparing for the competition this work was entered into, so I was full of worries myself at the time. So I drew characters with speech bubbles saying things like "I'm so nervous I can't think," and "I have to be brave!" Those characters made it into the front of the book during the design process, too.

**Q: You said that you were inspired to write *How I Caught a Cold* by chance when you pulled on a duck down parka. Do you have a special technique for conjuring up your childhood self for inspiration?**

A: It's true I had a duck down parka I loved back in sixth grade, the same green color worn by the protagonist of *How I Caught a Cold*. But I wasn't particularly inspired by my child-



hood experiences. I was in a practical class in university where we were presenting close-up cross-section illustrations of objects. A good friend of mine presented a diagram of a duck down parka. The cross-section came to mind while I was preparing for the competition, and I decided I wanted to write a story about a child who meets a flock of ducks in a cold place in her dreams, and the adventures she has with them. As it happens, I read a book about children's psychology at the time, and some of the more memorable concepts from that book made their way into my ideas.

For instance, when an adult develops boils, they'll simply conclude they're unwell. But according to the book I read, children who end up with the same condition will wonder, "Did I do something to deserve this?" Just like the protagonist of *How I Caught a Cold*, who thinks she got sick because she gave all the down in her jacket to the ducks in her dream, when really she simply went to bed without covering up properly. Then she thinks, "I know I gave all the down to the ducks, but a feather came out of my jacket." I wanted to show the way children blur reality and dreams in their minds, reflect their unique way of thinking in the thoughts of the main character.

**Q: Of the works you've published thus far, which has been the biggest turning point in terms of artistic technique, something that defined your style from that point onwards?**

**A:** I've been using Hwaseonji as a medium since my first book *How I Caught a Cold*. I studied Western painting techniques in university, but also took a lot of Eastern art classes as well. I held on to some of the Hwaseonji I'd bought for those classes, and used them again in *The First Day of School*. *The First Day of School* intercuts between the first day of school for children in the 1960s and the 2000s. The narrative purposely contrasts the experiences, and





I had to make sure the mise-en-scène was realistic enough to clearly represent the eras I was depicting, which meant I had to work with more saturated hues than before. Unfortunately, Hwaseonji is such a fragile medium that I couldn't color them as strongly as I wanted without my pencil crayons tearing through the paper. My solution was to glue Hwaseonji to standard paper for the backgrounds, and to cut out the objects and people I'd drawn on other pieces of Hwaseonji to paste them on the completed background. I made cutouts of name tags, dolls, flowerpots, furniture, walls, doors, and people, and positioned them on the backgrounds I made, collecting them together into one complete scene. I suppose "technique" might be too lofty of a term to use for this process, but it worked very well for this particular book. So I decided to use it again for the next book, and used it in *Farewell*, a story about an old woman who cleans up the corpses of animals.



**Q: Critics were pleasantly surprised at your bold decision to directly depict dead animals in *Farewell*, the story about laying roadkill to rest. Wasn't it difficult doing research for it?**

**A:** I had to gather a lot of reference photographs in order to tell the stories of dead animals. I mostly searched online, and dead cats and dogs were especially common. Drivers tend to move larger creatures like dead water deer off the road because they can cause problems, but small animals were usually left where they were, and run over by passing vehicles. I was pregnant when I was collecting those images. It was curious that I happened to pick that specific subject matter at such a sensitive time, and it was a difficult task, but I had to do it, and I have a stronger stomach than most. I took time off after giving birth and went back to work a year later, and when my child was four years old, I showed the pictures I made. My child asked, "Mommy, is she making the animals get better?" "Mommy, where's the animal hurt?" It turns out that children weren't repulsed by my depictions of dead animals, although

their individual interpretations differed. My friend's daughter memorized the lines of the old woman and even performed dialogue like "Rest easy now," and "I'm so glad about the weather today" as if she were a voice actress. Some children think the animals in this book are just asleep or recovering, that the old woman is nursing them back to health.



**Q: The book is about nurturing and care, but didn't some readers say it was too gory?**

**A:** I heard that comment from an author, actually. They asked why I felt it was necessary to draw a dead dog, exposed organs and all. They didn't mean to offend, of course. They just didn't have a strong stomach. During a seminar where we discussed the lines we could or couldn't cross in books intended for children, I remarked that when I worked on *Farewell*, I didn't think my readers would be repulsed by the subject matter I depicted. It hadn't even



occurred to me that some people might think it crossed the line. And the reality is, we're surrounded by the deaths of insects, like worms, cicadas, bees, and ladybugs. The deaths of those creatures is fundamentally the same as the deaths of the dead animals I depicted in *Farewell*. I don't think it's right to consider the deaths of insects—which children are regularly exposed to—as not-grotesque while claiming that the deaths of larger animals and the exposure of their insides are grotesque. I produced *Farewell* in the hopes that someone might give the animals left dead on the road a proper goodbye. To give real shape to those ever-flattened and torn pieces rolling across the streets.

**Q: Fans often say they trust your books by reputation alone, that your books are worth keeping on the shelf permanently. Is there anything you'd like to hold on to permanently? Or to phrase differently, do you have the idea of eternity in mind?**

**A:** The short-haired protagonist of *How I Caught a Cold* doesn't have a name, but I love her enough to have a bead ornament of her hanging in my room. My publisher asked me to illustrate a Christmas card last year for readers, and I found myself drawing this girl, the protagonist of my first book. And I think I'll keep drawing her in the future. Right now, I'm working on a book about a water ghost, a supporting character from *My Almighty Rubberpowered Airplane*. Water ghosts in that book were a physical representation of children's fears and worries, and I suppose in a sense, they are a representation of eternity in my mind as well. I'm also very fond of the dog Munsu in *Munsu's Secret*. I think all the characters I've ever created will stay with me for good.



Interviewer : Choi Moon-hee(Editor-in-chief of the SLJ)

from School Library Journal, Oct. 6, 2022





## 5 | Complete Biography

- As an author-illustrator



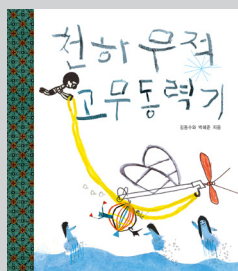
**To Do List**  
Changbi Publishers, 2024



**Farewell**  
Borim Press, 2016



**Kiss Kiss**  
Borim Press, 2008



**My Almighty Rubberpowered Airplane**  
Written & illustrated by Kim Dong-soo,  
organized by Park Hye-joon  
Borim Press, 2005



**How I Caught a Cold**  
Borim Press, 2002



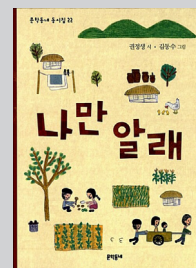
● As an illustrator



**Munsu's Secret**  
Lyrics picture book  
written by Lucid Fall  
Changbi Publishers, 2021



**Washing Hair**  
Board book  
written by Choi Jung-sun  
Borim Press, 2018



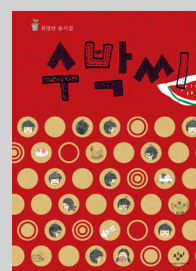
**No One Else Will Know**  
Poems by Kwon Jeong-saeng  
Munhakdongne, 2012



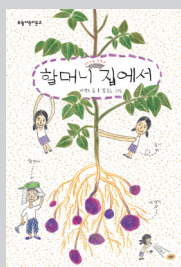
**The First Day of School**  
Picture book  
written by Song Eon  
Borim Press, 2011



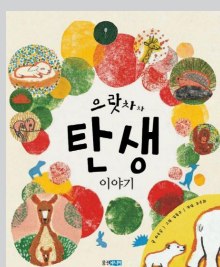
**Promise, Promise**  
Educational picture book  
written by Park Eun-gyeong  
Bear Books, 2009



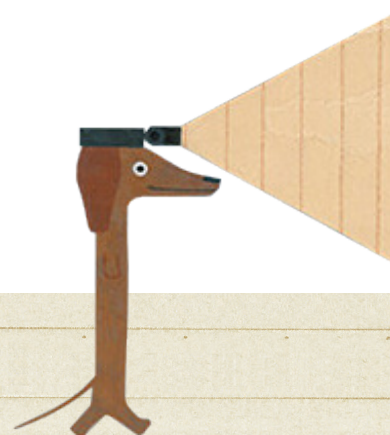
**The Watermelon Seed**  
Poems by Choi Myeong-ran  
Changbi Publishers, 2008



**Grandma's House**  
Chapter book  
written by Lee Yeong-deuk  
Borim Press, 2006



**The Story of Birth**  
Educational picture book  
written by Huh Eunsil  
Woongjin Junior, 2006



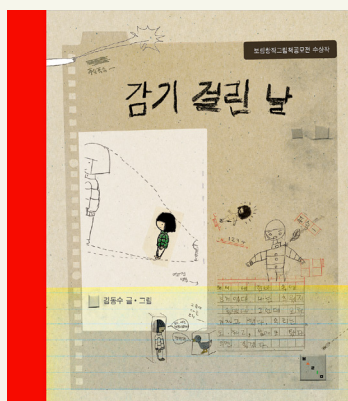


## 6 | Representative Books

### How I Caught a Cold

Written & illustrated by Kim Dong-soo

Borim Press, 2002

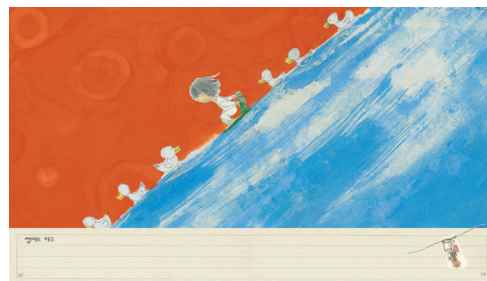


First Edition(2002)



New Cover Edition(2022)

This book begins with the simple sentence “Today we got lots of snow.” The protagonist’s mother presents her with a cozy duck down jacket, with a feather sticking out of it. Before she goes to sleep that night, the protagonist wonders where the feather might have come from, and dreams of a flock of naked ducks. They explain to her how they came to lose their feathers and what that has to do with her own jacket. The protagonist takes the feathers out of her own jacket and returns them to the ducks, befriending them and playing together. When she wakes up the next day, the protagonist sneezes. Her mother scolds her for not covering up with a blanket as she slept. But the protagonist, holding a thermometer in her mouth, asks the readers to agree with her about the real reason she caught a cold.





Kim Dong-soo's picture books contain no emotional excess. In no way does it appeal to sympathy. Her stiff-limbed characters look almost downcast. And yet this is a painfully real depiction of real children. In a group of ten children, for instance, perhaps only two or three speak loudly and use large gestures. The rest are either not paying attention or not especially responsive. That does not, however, mean their hearts are empty of emotion. These quiet children, just like their outgoing peers, also grin to themselves and nurse old wounds and are perfectly content to play alone in a corner. This is the reason Kim Dong-soo's books are so adored by young readers: her characters remind children of themselves, forming an instant connection. Her books may appear standoffish at first, but are keenly insightful.

Kim does not make frequent use of embellishment in her stories or illustrations. She is also not prone to using onomatopoeia, which allows readers to focus exclusively on the events of the narrative. She uses both traditional ink and colored pencils, yet does not utilize many colors. Kim relies on the sheer precision of her art and writings, and the rhythm she generates, to captivate children. When a character braces for a sneeze, beginning with the sound "Ahh...", the readers find themselves holding their breaths as well. Kim, however, does not grant instant relief. Readers must move on to the next page before the sneeze is completed with "CHOO!" This powerful catharsis is only possible because of the simplicity of the images and words, which offer no distractions to the reader. Kim Dong-soo's books are unlike many other children's books in that they offer genuine tension even to children.

Openness is another defining trait of Kim's work. She does not make unfair use of narrative tropes like "It was all just a dream." If such a device is used, she makes clear to readers before the dream begins that the character has fallen asleep. This does not belie a lack of imagination, however—it is, rather, boldness. The courage to wink at the reader and say, "You know this is really more than a dream, right?" The final imagery of a feather floating into the sky is a sign that the events of the dream were more real than adults might assume, a hint at a shared secret between protagonist and reader. By being brought into the fold of the character's secret, the young reader feels as though they are treated as an equal, like a mature adult reading a letter from a colleague.

Kim Dong-soo's art style is unique and specific to her alone, a humble but concise language that provides a welcome reprieve from the blinding visual effects that fill many illustrated and animated works we are exposed to today.

by Kim Ji-eun(literary critic of children's literature)

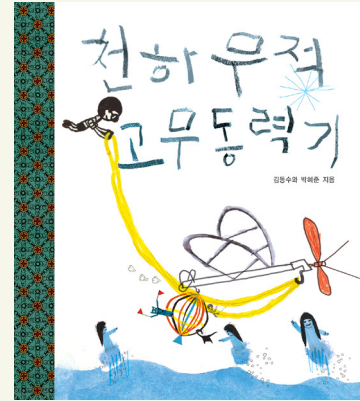
from 'Picture Book Authors of Korea' Naver Cast, Jun. 2, 2010



# My Almighty Rubberpowered Airplane

Written & illustrated by Kim Dong-soo, organized by Park Hye-joon

Borim Press, 2005



One day, the protagonist buys a rubber-powered airplane kit and puts it together by himself at home while he waits for his mother to come home from work. The child wants to show off his work to everyone, but there is no one in the house—so he lets his imagination run free and flies through the sky on his rubber-powered airplane, traveling past N Seoul Tower, the bridges spanning the Han River, and the rest of the world. He even encounters playful dinosaurs and ghosts. This book is dotted with childlike doodles and freeform imagery, grounded firmly in the perspective of young readers. Kim Dong-soo's witty, playful side also fills the pages as she captures the loneliness of a child playing alone while capturing readers' imagination with her fantastic narrative. When the mother comes home that evening, she finds the child fast asleep, exhausted from the day's adventures. *My Almighty Rubberpowered Airplane* is a source of encouragement and empathy for children who struggle with loneliness.



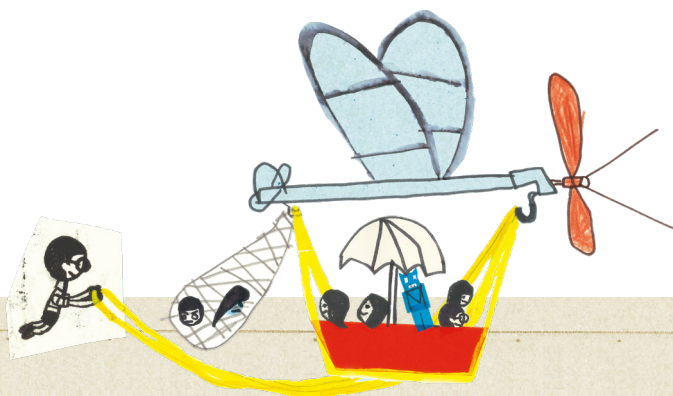


## The Isolated Child and the Fantasy of the Megacity

Based on a set of four illustrations submitted to the Korea Art Competition for Publishing, *My Almighty Rubberpowered Airplane* was painted on the traditional Korean medium of Hwaseonji rice paper with the traditional Korean muk ink. The water ghosts featured in the work, with their long black hair, are based on classic Korean folk imagery from works such as *The Story of Janghwa and Hongryeon*. Author Kim Dong-soo has close personal experiences with rubber-powered airplanes, having crafted several by hand in junior high school and entered school-, city-, and province-level competitions with her creations. This work centers on the powerful bonds between mother and child, and the loneliness children face in the hours their mothers are away. The protagonist of this book makes every effort to pass the time on his own and sees his imagination come to life.

*My Almighty Rubberpowered Airplane* is perhaps Kim's greatest show of trust in children. The protagonist tinkers with a rubber-powered airplane kit as he waits for his mother to come home from work, finally completing his work but with no one to share his triumph. He shouts out loud for anyone to come celebrate with him, but just as he despairs in the silence, a magical power comes upon the airplane. Carrying the child, the airplane takes flight over realistic settings like the bridges over Seoul's Han River and the N Seoul Tower, juxtaposed by fantastic adventures with water ghosts and dinosaurs. Even in his dark room at home, the child is empowered by his rubber-powered airplane to turn the entire metropolis of Seoul into his personal playground. He enjoys a Ferris wheel ride with the water ghosts and feeds the time-traveling dinosaurs. Fantastic creatures transcend time and space to make friends with the protagonist, joining him at the annual autumn fireworks festival by the Han River, reflecting the protagonist's anticipation of seeing his mother again. The adventure eventually ends, and the story of the fantastic journey and the airplane that has been torn by accident is recorded in his journal as testament to his experiences.

Seoul is a megacity with a population of nearly ten million. A fantastic depiction of the metropolis, *My Almighty Rubberpowered Airplane* was part of the Korean feature showcase at the 2018 Bologna Children's Book Fair.





## Kiss Kiss

Written & illustrated by Kim Dong-soo

Borim Press, 2008



*Kiss Kiss* is a book for extremely young children that encourages physical expressions of love with the caregiver. A mother's physical gestures of love—such as kisses—have just as much power as the spoken words “I love you,” and this book serves as a gentle guide for first-time parents who may not be accustomed to looking after a child and expressing their affections. In each scene, baby animals exchange kisses with their mother in vividly-colored illustrations that capture the attention of young children, accompanied by tender and repetitive dialogue styled to the characteristics of each animal.

A board book that strengthens the bonds between child and caregiver, *Kiss Kiss* is the perfect publication for toddlers and parents strengthening their attachments and has been received to great acclaim in Korea, Japan, Taiwan, and China. *Kiss Kiss* is an exercise in affection, and allows families to grow a sense of emotional stability together.





## The Magic of Love to Grow a Child

*Kiss Kiss* is a book for very young children, comprised entirely of kissing mothers and children. The cover depicts a kissing monkey mother-child pair, and each page reveals fun and familiar animals such as ducks, tortoises, pigs, dogs, and sloths. Each illustration is accompanied by a simple but memorable phrase like “A kiss kiss between Mommy and her cute Baby,” “A kiss kiss between Mommy and her playful Baby,” and “A kiss kiss between Mommy and her sleepy Baby.” Each animal pair is depicted in its own, comfortable native environment, with the ducks in their pond, the tortoises on a field of gravel, and the sloths hanging from a tree.

The soft, warm lines and the bright colors are an unconditional invitation for young children exposed to their very first books, and the vivid expressions on the faces of the mother and baby animals encourage children to hug and kiss their parents. Reviews from parents rave about how their children were encouraged to exchange dozens of kisses throughout the reading experience. The gentle writing and the consistent but unrepentive illustrations are perfect for readers aged 0 to 3. Even the environmental details like grass, trees, and the snow are depicted in welcoming hues and shapes to reflect the way animals love one another just like humans. *Kiss Kiss* is sure to help young children not yet familiar with language or the world outside the home form beautiful memories about harmonious and loving environments.

*Kiss Kiss* is a quintessential children’s book and has been published to great acclaim in Taiwan and China. Kim Dong-soo also illustrated *Washing Hair*, a board book for toddlers learning foundational life skills for the first time that also achieved success in domestic and international markets.





# Farewell

Written & illustrated by Kim Dong-soo

Borim Press, 2016



An uplifting narrative by *How I Caught a Cold* author Kim Dong-soo and a final elegy for animals who depart the harsh world of the living, *Farewell* is a beautiful reflection on the ways human development has threatened and destroyed the environment and the creatures that live around us.

A large truck loiters in the middle of a dusky road, its headlamps still on. A cat watches, tense, from the shadows across the street. Something is under the truck's front wheel. The illustration is accompanied by a single line: "Thud. A dog was run over by the truck."

This is the powerful and unsettling first page of *Farewell*. Dedicated to the animals who lose their lives as roadkill after a lifetime of survival in the harsh landscapes left in the wake of human development, the book focuses on the remains that are left to rot and be flattened on the streets. It is an examination of the deaths of all innocent beings, whose deaths we briefly grimace at and forget.

## • Review

### A Heartfelt Reflection on Life and Death

*Farewell* invites an unusual star to the world of picture books: the countless animal corpses we look away from on the street. It is a difficult task to look directly at these bodies, with their ruptured bellies and broken limbs. But author Kim Dong-soo depicts those horrifying images with flat but elegant simplicity, cushioning the visual impact and lightening the tone with sprinklings of humor.

The protagonist is an old woman who collects scrap for a living. But when she picks dead animals off the streets and gives them the send-offs they deserved but never got, she appears almost like an all-loving mother goddess. Her messy black hair covers her eyes, obscuring her emotions, her nose is a simple black line, and her mouth almost looks as though it has been

sewn up. Using the old woman as an avatar of sorts, the author bandages together a snake whose body has been severed, closes up an owl's belly and puts its feathers back in place, and blows shape back into a squashed frog. When these animals have been restored to their original forms, their dark, hazy eyes finally close in proper rest.

The scrap collector's eyes are always on the filthy ground. But the old woman's act of picking up scrap for a living almost lends the work an air of nobility. It is only because her eyes are on the ground that she can spot the dog run over by a truck, and pick it up and put it on her scrap cart.

Kim Dong-soo calls readers into a dim, dark time between evening and dawn—a time of day chosen specifically to highlight those who do not sleep when everyone else is in bed. A time when people in poverty must work, a time of stillness when the streets finally fall silent and we can listen to the smallest of noises outside. Kim opens the readers' ears, pulls them into the old woman's room, and calls them to face the consequences of their actions. It is noteworthy that the act of restoration and mourning happens not in a place of great glory and recognition, but the outskirts of society—the old woman's home.

The old woman's character design, too, seems more suited to death than life, especially when viewed in profile. She bears a strong resemblance to a ragdoll as she stitches up ghosts and consoles their souls.

There is no element of the mainstream in *Farewell*. The book is set largely in the home of the old woman, a place on the outskirts far removed from the noises of the city. This creative choice allows readers to vicariously experience a world of silence, with the lonely street lamps tugging them towards the dark. The minimalistic backdrop, ironically, seems to communicate the most majestic and respectful of funerals.

The next morning, a light drizzle falls on the world, and the author prays for the reincarnation of the dead into paradise as she sends lotus flowers drifting into the river, with the restored animals laid gently in their little boats. The sharp-eyed readers might spot a cameo in this scene, with the ducks from *How I Caught a Cold* leading the boats into the afterlife.

Kim Dong-soo imbues her books with an innocent and humble yet powerful emotion visible only to the eyes of children. *Farewell* is almost poetic in nature, simple but moving as it engages our senses to deliver a loving eulogy to the dead.

by Kim Hwan-yeong (picture book artist)

from News Seochon, Nov. 29, 2017



## To Do List

Written & illustrated by Kim Dong-soo

Changbi Publishers, 2024



A girl in a bob cut picks up garbage by the water with fallen branches, pulling out chip bags, soda cans, and more. But when the girl reaches for what looks like a black plastic bag, she lands a water ghost instead. The water ghost carries the girl to the village of water ghosts, who are not scary creatures. They welcome her and explain why they brought her there: water ghosts are meant to clean up polluted waters, but the rivers have gotten so dirty that they never have enough hands to help.

As with many of her previous works like *How I Caught a Cold*, Kim Dong-soo begins with a seemingly innocuous theme and weaves it into a narrative about protecting the environment. The environment is an important subject for all, but it is prone to coming across as too serious or difficult for young readers, sometimes even blamed for feelings of sadness and grief. Kim, however, fills her books with upbeat humor. Her themes are neither sad nor painful. Her child character gladly takes baby ghosts on strolls and plays with them, a kind of decision any young reader might be happy to make.

When the young ghosts taken care of by the protagonist grow into adulthood, they too will help purify the waters. At the same time, the protagonist will also become an adult and remember those happy moments, which will enrich the things she does in her own life. *To Do List* is a colorful invitation from Kim to explore the worlds she has painstakingly crafted.

## The Ingenious Imagination of a Water Spirit Purifying Polluted Water

*To Do List* is a deceptively humdrum title for a story where water ghosts “kidnap” a child. But this playful book surprises readers who finish the book with the hidden sense of importance hiding in the title, because the water ghosts with their long black hair have a mission of critical consequence: purifying polluted water.

The protagonist is picking up cans, chip bags, and other trash from the riverside as she always does when she accidentally catches something long and black. At first she assumes it is a plastic bag, but quickly realizes she has landed a hollow-eyed water ghost. The ghost takes the child into the world under the surface, and it turns out she is not kidnapping the child—she is temporarily hiring the protagonist to help, because the adult water ghosts have their hands full trying to fight the ever-worsening pollution. The child is given a to-do-list for the day. She is to care for the baby water ghosts, help the working ghosts with their work and breaks, and spend time studying and playing with the water ghost children.

Author Kim Dong-soo fills the world of the water ghosts with humor, fantasy, and kindness. Water ghosts purify water by clinging together, drinking up polluted water, and expelling clean water from the tips of their hair. At other times, these ghosts do handstands with dumbbells to strengthen their hair muscles, reflecting the difficulties of countering the effects of human pollution.

It is important to note that the child’s to-do-list does not actually include cleaning. Her role is to help care for young water ghosts and ghosts who have come back exhausted from work. Rather than visible work like hauling trash en masse, the child’s role is that of a nurturer who helps care for nature as it heals. *To Do List* asserts that a sustainable future can only be built on a foundation of mutual care between humans, animals, and nature.

by Kim Hwan-yeong(journalist)

from Kyunghyang Shinmun, Aug. 29, 2024





## 7 | Other Works

### Munsu's Secret

(Written by Lucid Fall)

Changbi Publishers, 2021



Author Kim Dong-soo illustrated this work based on the lyrics of popular Korean singer-songwriter Lucid Fall. A look at the life of a young musician from the surprisingly observant perspective of his dog, *Munsu's Secret* uses its unusual narrator to cast an imaginative filter over the world, making a persuasive case for the dog as an independent being in and of itself. The use of the dog's perspective sets it apart from works that feature animals from an outside viewpoint, compelling readers to step out of the box and explore a new world altogether.

Kim Dong-soo makes characteristic use of straight lines and grids, making ample use of such elements to show how both people and dogs seek routine in their lives as part of the same household. By applying multiple-point perspective in multiple parts of each illustration, which is overall rendered in shallow single-point perspective, Kim utilizes the traditional composition of Korean Chaekgado art. This approach not only minimizes distortion in the depiction of objects in the image, it also makes it seem like all objects in the illustration are looking directly at the reader. The use of another traditional element, the Hwaseonji, lends a warm and passive but still-unyielding, introverted images to generate coziness. Dog lovers are guaranteed to smile at the familiar situations depicted in the narrative.

The scene “First Love-Space-Lover” is composed of only three frames, but is testament to the power of simplicity in the way it defines the time spent with Munsu. The iconic scene of Munsu swimming with Dad depicts their clasped hands in two dimensions, yet contains unfathomable emotional depth. *Munsu's Secret* is guaranteed to enamor both fans of the song “Munsu's Secret” and new readers alike.

## Washing Hair

(Written by Choi Jung-sun)

Borim Press, 2018



As the title implies, this is a book about washing one's hair and depicts lovable animals taking turns washing hair. From a brave lion to adorable sparrows to quick horses and high-jumping kangaroo families, each animal has an endearing quirk hidden behind what they initially appear.

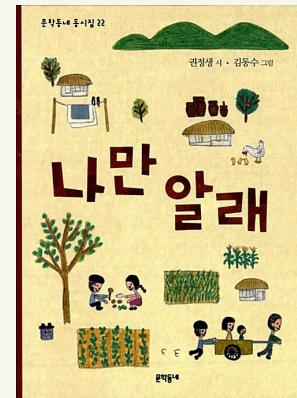
Each page behind the roaring lion, the tweeting sparrows, the galloping horse, and the hopping kangaroos reveals sides of animals young readers could not have expected. The animals rub shampoo into their hair and rinse themselves, working up lather and cleaning themselves in idiosyncratic ways. The book ends with a human child, a girl named Bom, who shows off her own hair-washing technique. Many young children are afraid of washing their hair, but this humorous narrative eases their fears and makes bathtime exciting and fun. *Washing Hair* has also been officially translated and published in Taiwan and China to great success.



## No One Else Will Know

(Poems by Kwon Jeong-saeng)

Munhakdongne, 2012



The Korean version of Hans Christian Andersen, Kwon Jeong-saeng suffered for years in poverty and sickness and lived a simple life, writing literary works for children. Even now, many children in Korea know his poems and stories by heart.

*No One Else Will Know* is an anthology of forty-two poems from a selection chosen by Kwon himself in the midst of his battle with illness, revised to be more easily comprehensible for children. Kwon began work on this collection following an intensive operation, after which he was informed he only had two more years to live. His dream of publishing a lovely book of children's poetry was finally made real when Kim Dong-soo provided accompanying illustrations for this anthology.

Kim's illustrations are reimaginings of Kwon's original artwork, elevating the book to classic status. Kwon had wanted to illustrate his books himself, but had been unable to afford paint and used only red and blue pencil crayons to draw pictures. His art had never been flashy, erring on the side of being too humble, but were filled with heart. Kim's interpretation of his art carries on Kwon's brilliant mind and reimagines the atmosphere of his childhood for contemporary readers. Kim's art bridges the generational gap and allows children to empathize with the pain of Kwon's poverty and deprivation, and also with his unassailable optimism and zest for life. The inclusion of children's scribbles and doodles enhances the sense of peering into the heart of a child.

## The First Day of School

(Written by Song Eon)

Borim Press, 2011



A look at the first day of school from the perspectives of 1960s child Gu Dong-jun and 2000s child Kim Ji-yun, *The First Day of School* depicts all the milestone events for Korean children in the leadup to the big day. From the school entrance notice to the pre-entrance day, the entrance ceremony, and the very first classes, the events are depicted in the form of picture diaries and describe the children's daily lives, impressions, and circumstances. The simple, childlike pictures and journal entries vividly reflect the excitement and anxiety, the expectations and fears of the protagonists. *The First Day of School* was written by Song Eon, who attended school a generation before illustrator Kim Dong-soo. Their different experiences are reflected in the contrasting narration, which runs side-by-side for easy comparison. This book is also of significant archival value as a collection of realistic mise-en-scène depicting the realities of contemporary Korean life. The illustrations are collages, with elements such as name tags, dolls, flowerpots, furniture, walls, doors, and people all cut out and decorated separately before being pasted onto the Hwaseonji backdrops reinforced with standard paper.

The narrative is enhanced by the fact that Gu Dong-jun, the 1960s schoolchild, is the teacher of Kim Ji-yun, the 2000s schoolchild. This device generates understanding and empathy across generations, allowing young readers a small preview of the next stage of their lives and come to see their teachers not as distant figures but real people with whom they have much in common. The forty-year gap between the childhoods of Gu Dong-jun and Kim Ji-yun also allows readers to appreciate how much has changed about family and school in the intervening decades. *The First Day of School* is a faithful recreation of the daily lives and schooling of children across the generations and the social transformations that have taken place.



## Grandma's House

(Written by Lee Yeong-deuk)

Borim Press, 2006



*Grandma's House* tells the story of city girl Sol and the humble joys she discovers at her grandmother's house in the countryside. Urban children often consider rural settings to be boring, but Sol captures the life in the dirt and the winds and the grass through her innocent eyes, redefining what many of her peers consider monotonous.

Sol pulls up a potato plant, revealing a bountiful harvest of heavy purple potatoes; a mole pokes its head out of the ground right next to her. Nature is alive and well in the countryside, and the Gyeongsang Province “backwater boy” Sanggu awkwardly hands her a freshly-laid egg from his chicken coop.

Sol is not excited about the countryside at first. Like other city children, she initially shakes her head when her parents suggest going to Grandma's house, and she sees the “backwater boy” Sanggu as an ill-mannered country kid. But slowly and organically, over the span of four episodes, Sol begins to open her heart. Each page is presented like a diary, filling the book with genuine honesty and bravery.

## 8 | List of Translated Editions

### • How I Caught a Cold



감기 걸린 날, Borim Press, Korea, 2002

かぜひいちゃった日, Iwasaki Shoten, Japan, 2004

Πώς κρυολόγησα, Kedros, Greece, 2006

Un Rhume... au plum', Lettre'Ange, France, 2006

感冒的日子, Hsin-Yi, Taiwan, 2007

### • Kiss Kiss



엄마랑 뽀뽀, Borim Press, Korea, 2008

あかちゃんとおちゅ, Bronze Publishing, Japan, 2009

和妈妈亲亲, Beijing Science and Technology Publishing House, China, 2015

寶貝親親, Sharp Point Press, Taiwan, 2015



## • Washing Hair



머리 감는 책, Borim Press, Korea, 2018

這樣洗頭最開心, Hsiao Lu, Taiwan, 2020

这样洗头最开心, Qingdao, China, 2021

## • Promise, Promise



집에 있을 때 꼭꼭 약속해, Bear Books, Korea, 2009

一个人在家我不怕, Xinxing Publishing House, China, 2016

我在家裡不搗蛋, Peace International, Taiwan, 2022

## 9 | List of Awards and Other Distinctions

Year	Awards and Distinctions
2025	Bologna Children's Book Fair, KPIPA Exhibition Artist Selection
2024	Winner of the 65th Korea Book Awards in Children's Book Category
2024	Bologna Children's Book Fair, KPIPA Exhibition Artist Selection
2022	Bogota International Book Fair, Guest of Honor Country 100 Korean Picture Books
2021	KPIPA K-Book Trends Picture Book Author Selection
2019	Gothenburg International Book Fair, Guest of Honor Country 50 Korean Picture Books
2017	Istanbul International Book Fair, 58 Korean Picture Books
	BIB(Biennial of Illustrations Bratislava) Korean Entries Selection
2016	Paris International Book Fair, Seven Emotions in 130 Picture Books
	Guadalajara International Book Fair, 49 Korean Picture Books
2009	Bologna Children's Book Fair, Guest of Honor Country Author Selection
2002	Commendation Prize, Borim Picture Book Contest
2001	Grand Prize, Korean Art Competition for Publishing

- Included in the Elementary School Textbooks : *How I Caught a Cold, The First Day of School, The Watermelon Seed*
- Selected for the Bookstart Korea List : *Kiss Kiss, Washing Hair, Munsu's Secret*



## 10 | Exhibitions, Lectures, Fairs, etc.

Authors From Korea,  
Bologna Children's Book Fair, Italy



2024

Jeonju International Picture Book Festival Lecture



A Sip of Water, A Piece of Heart,  
Sowol Art Hall, Seoul



2023

One Book Project at Seoul Institute of the Arts  
Lecture

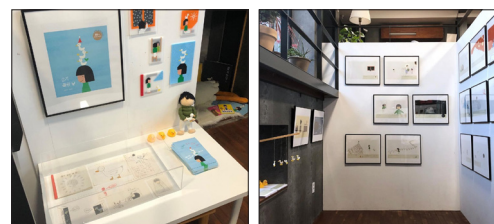


Companion Exhibit,  
Korea Manhwa Museum



2022

《How I Caught a Cold》  
20th Anniversary Commemorative Exhibition,  
Egg Bookstore, Seoul

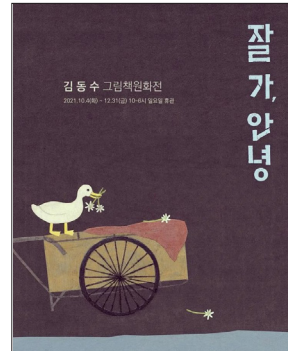


Kim Dong-soo Original Illustration Exhibition,  
Busan Books and Kid Gallery Pyeongshim



2022

Kim Dong-soo Picture Book Original  
Illustration Exhibition,  
Gimpo Nari Book Gallery



Iksan Municipal Yucheon Library Lecture

2022

Our Picture Books Traveling the World,  
National Library for Children and Young Adults  
Korea

2021



2020

Seoul Gangdong-gu Small Library Smiling  
Book Lecture



2019

Suncheon Picture Book Library Lecture

Calm Band-Aid by Kim Dong-soo,  
Gunpo Cultural Foundation Gunpo Lifelong  
Learning Center

2019

Gunpo Cultural Foundation Gunpo Lifelong  
Learning Center Lecture





2018 ● Incheon Yeongjong Library Lecture



Pyeongtaek Municipal Jisan Green Library Lecture ● 2018

2017 ● Jeonju National Museum of Children Lecture

Seven Shapes of the Heart, Hyundai Museum of Kids' Books and Art(MOKA) ● 2016 ● Seoul Gwangsan District Story Flower Library Lecture



2015 ● Happy Picture Book Stories, Jeju Art Museum



Huddle Around Picture Book Village, Paju Asia Publication Culture & Information Center ● 2013







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Illustrator **Kim Dong-soo**

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